



# News Release

**For immediate release:** August 25, 2011

(11-125)

Contacts: [Julie Graham](#), Communications Office

360-236-4022

[Lonnie Malone](#), Immunization and Child Profile Office

360-236-3529

## **Teen immunization rates improve in Washington**

*More work needed to meet state and national immunization goals for protecting teens*

**OLYMPIA** — New state-by-state teen immunization rates released today in the 2010 National Immunization Survey show Washington above the national average for the third year in a row. Although more Washington teens are protected from serious vaccine-preventable diseases than in previous years, we're still below our goals for immunization coverage among teens.

"The improvement in our teen vaccination rates shows that healthcare providers are talking to parents and teens about vaccinations," said Secretary of Health Mary Selecky. "Immunizing teens is just as important as immunizing young children - it protects the teens and it protects babies in the family who are too young for vaccination."

Even with the gains in teen immunization rates, the survey shows that Washington is not meeting the national goal of vaccinating 90 percent of teens with recommended immunizations that protect against human papillomavirus (HPV), whooping cough (pertussis), and meningococcal disease. The survey also covers three routine childhood vaccines: measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR); hepatitis B; and chickenpox (varicella). Our rates for these vaccines also improved in 2010, but we are still behind the national goal.

Our state has one of the highest HPV vaccination rates in the nation. Our rate for the first dose of HPV vaccine increased from 60 percent to 69.3 percent. The national average is 48.7 percent. Despite being above the national average for starting the three-dose series of HPV vaccine, most teens don't get the second or third dose. To be protected, teens must finish the three-dose series.

This year, our whooping cough immunization rate increased from 60.1 percent to 70.6 percent. Tdap, the whooping cough vaccine, became available in 2005 for adolescents and adults. Teens who aren't up-to-date can spread whooping cough and other diseases to babies and young kids

who are too young, or who cannot be fully immunized because of a health condition. Most people get a series of whooping cough vaccines as kids, but protection wears off over time. Booster shots play a key role in the fight against vaccine-preventable diseases. In our state, whooping cough continues to be a serious problem, with more than 600 cases reported last year. In 2011, 286 cases have been reported compared to the 238 reports received by this time last year.

Some diseases, such as chickenpox, are more dangerous for older teens than they are for healthy children older than one year. To be fully protected teens must be immunized on time. Missing or delaying even one vaccine leaves them at risk for catching and spreading disease. Parents should get their teens immunized when they see their health care provider for sports physicals, injuries, and mild illnesses.

The Department of Health gives health care providers tools such as the state's Immunization Registry, to help improve immunization services. We also work closely with providers, health insurers, local health agencies, and other partners to make sure kids have access to vaccines.

Parents are urged to see their regular health care provider for immunizations. To find a provider or an immunization clinic, call your [local health agency](http://www.doh.wa.gov/LHJMap/LHJMap.htm) (www.doh.wa.gov/LHJMap/LHJMap.htm) or the Family Health Hotline at 1-800-322-2588.

More information on immunizations is on the Department of Health [Immunization and Child Profile office website](http://www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/Immunize) (www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/Immunize). The [National Immunization Survey](http://www.cdc.gov/nis/) (www.cdc.gov/nis/) is available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

###

The [Department of Health website](http://www.doh.wa.gov) (www.doh.wa.gov) is your source for *a healthy dose of information*. Also, [find us on Facebook](#) and [follow us on Twitter](#).